

CHAPTER IV

VARIANCES

400 PROCEDURES

The Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has established maximums to control the size and weight of loads and/or vehicles that may be permitted to use the State highways. In the instance where a load exceeds 14'0" in width, 135'0" in overall length, permit weight ranges or requires multiple width hauling equipment, the transporter, owner or manufacturer may request a variance to allow movement of the vehicle and/or load which exceeds these limits. All requests for a variance must be in writing to the Chief, Transportation Permit Branch in Sacramento Headquarters. Verbal variances are not granted. Variance requests shall be submitted to the Chief, Transportation Permit Branch no later than 30 days in advance of the proposed move. It may be necessary to have pre-move meetings between the districts involved, the California Highway Patrol, transporter and pilot car operator. When requesting a variance, the following information must be submitted.

- 400.1 Proof that no other mode of transportation is reasonably available. This includes letters from railroad and/or barge companies for verification. A letter from the railroad is required only when the load is less than 16'0" wide. A letter from the barge company will not be required when ports are not reasonably available for both points of origin and destination within the state.
- 400.2 Scale drawings and/or photographs to establish that the load will be transported in the smallest size possible.
- 400.3 Certification by the manufacturer/designer that the critical nature or technical or structural requirements prohibit field fabrication of small component pieces. Economics or fabrication ease is insufficient justification without a bona fide economic comparison furnished by the manufacturer/designer indicating the range of total costs for the various options of fabrication and transportation.
- 400.4 Name and telephone number of the Permit Service that will assist in obtaining your permit if applicable.
- 400.5 Caltrans District where the permit will be obtained.

401 WIDTHS

The established maximum for the width of any vehicle and/or load is 14'0"; any dimension greater will require a variance. The only exception to this is for specific construction equipment, implements of husbandry and other equipment as discussed in Chapter II.

402 LENGTHS

The established maximum for the length of any combination of vehicles and/or loads is 135'0"; any length greater will require a variance.

403 WEIGHTS

The Bridge Department has assigned maximum capacity ratings to all bridges. Any load that exceeds the purple classification (Plate 25-5) will be subject to the approval of the given loaded hauling configuration by the Office of Structures Maintenance and Headquarters Permit Office. Overweight variance loads shall be routed over a 5P (PPPPP) route as determined by the District Permit Engineer before being submitted to Headquarters for a bridge analysis.

404 HEIGHTS

The maximum allowable height is governed by the vertical clearance of any overhead structure required for the vehicle and/or load. A three-inch minimum clearance must be maintained at all times. Due to the varying vertical clearances of overhead structures throughout the state, the maximum allowable height will be determined by the districts involved. Written route review may be required from the applicant for heights greater than 17'0".

405 WAIVER OF NORMAL RESTRICTIONS

Normal time restrictions such as night movement, weekend movement, etc., may be temporarily waived if it is determined that the movement of the variance load/vehicle during those times would benefit the safety of the traveling public.

406 NINE AND THIRTEEN AXLE HEAVY HAULING COMBINATIONS

406.1 VEHICLE CONFIGURATIONS THAT NEED SPECIAL BRIDGE ANALYSIS:

406.1.1 Vehicle combinations normally routed as a 9-axle with an interior bridge (spacing between inner axles in the groups bordering the load deck) of 40'0" and greater, and using a pusher. This combination shall be routed as a 13-axle.

406.1.2 Vehicle combinations normally routed as a 13-axle configuration with a pusher(s).

406.1.3 Vehicle combinations normally routed as a 13-axle with an interior axle bridge (spacing between inner axles in the groups bordering the load deck) of 40'0" and greater, with or without a pusher.

406.2 APPLICATION PROCESS:

406.2.1 After hauling contract has been confirmed, the applicant should contact a State permit office to verify that their proposed route is acceptable to the State.

406.2.2 State office shall make a preliminary review of the proposed route for acceptable width, height and length; and verify that all structures on the route have purple load carrying capacity for the vehicle used. Written route review may be required from the applicant for heights greater than 17'0".

406.2.3 In reviewing the route, the Permit Engineer shall consider whether or not any of the structures along the route and on the list developed by Structures Maintenance can be crossed safely under the following conditions. If either of the following conditions can be used, they shall be:

- When the CHP, at their direction, provides traffic control, the pusher can be safely eliminated while crossing any of the concerned structures.
- When the CHP, at their direction, provides traffic control, any of the concerned structures can be safely crossed at a reduced speed; be positioned to cross at the center of the structure and with no other traffic on the structure.

406.2.4 The applicant shall submit the variance request to Headquarters with the pertinent data and list of those structures that will be crossed. Only those structures on the list need to be included in the application. The application shall show whether or not either of the conditions in 406.2.3 above are applicable and on which structures.

The District Permit Engineer shall verify the bridge list by signature and date before the variance application is submitted to Headquarters.

407 DISTRICT COORDINATION

407.1 The permit application must be submitted to the district permit office no later than three days prior to move.

407.2 Route survey required for height greater than 17'0". Route survey shall include the following;

407.2.1 Origin and Destination

407.2.2 Proposed route (confer with District Permit Engineer)

407.2.3 List of structures: 1) State routes; 2) city of county routes

407.2.4 Fuel stops on State highways

- 407.2.5 Turn outs
- 407.2.6 Obstacles and their owners (i.e., Cable TV wires, telephone wires, etc.)
- 407.2.7 Critical turns (location)
- 407.2.8 Approximate speed (MPH) of move: 1) maximum; b) low; c) where
- 407.2.9 Identify problem areas where length, width, height or weight will cause a problem
- 407.2.10 Time of move. List time of move through predicted problem areas
___ Day; Location ___; Time ___
___ Night; Location ___; Time ___
- 407.2.11 City and/or county permits require
___ Yes ___ No ___ Obtained
- 407.2.12 What will be done to avoid obstacles
- 407.2.13 Areas where special traffic control will be required
___ CHP ___ Contractor ___ Others
- 407.2.14 Pilot car operator needed for traffic control anywhere on route
___ Yes ___ No
- 407.3 Written certification from the transporter (not applicant) that arrangements for removal of obstruction (signal heads, wires, signs, etc.) have been made.
- 407.4 Wire boards at 18'0" heights or greater.
- 407.5 Written traffic control procedures for users where indicated on route survey.
- 407.6 Second or third power unit where determined necessary for traction, speed, braking, etc. Confer with transporter and CHP.
- 407.7 Turning radius and track width for use to determine ability to make questionable turns indicated in route survey.

For loads over 15'0" in width or with unique features, the following actions will be taken:

- 408.1 Caltrans Headquarters Permit Office will prepare a letter for the permittee approving a variance and indicating whether or not the California Highway Patrol will be involved in escorting the move. It will also specify the local California Highway Patrol contact and telephone number. Copies of the letter will be sent to the districts involved.
- 408.2 The information in the variance letter will be given to the permittee and the district issuing the permit via telephone or facsimile transmission if requested.
- 408.3 For certified military moves, the teletype and verbal communication to the district will indicate California Highway Patrol involvement (if any) and specify the California Highway Patrol contact person with the telephone number. The same information will be given to the permittee verbally.
- 408.4 The District Permit Engineer will obtain traffic operations input and will coordinate the conditions to be specified in the permit with the designated California Highway Patrol contact person and maintenance personnel.
- 408.5 A critical item inspection will be included as a permit condition only if specifically requested by the California Highway Patrol.
- 408.6 The California Highway Patrol will bill the permittee for providing California Highway Patrol assistance.
- 408.7 District permit engineers shall include the following statement on the permit: "California Highway Patrol shall be involved in this move."
- 408.8 The transporter shall contact the CHP Division Headquarters office nearest the origin of the move for details and appointment for a Critical Item Inspection if required by the CHP. Caltrans will not issue the permit until notification has been provided that the CHP concerns have been satisfied or the necessary arrangements have been made.

CHP VARIANCE LOAD COORDINATORS

DIVISION	PHONE NUMBER
NORTHERN	(916) 225-2715
VALLEY	(916) 366-5185
GOLDEN GATE	(707) 648-4180
CENTRAL	(209) 488-4329
SOUTHERN	(805) 257-3755
BORDER	(619) 237-6811
COASTAL	(805) 549-3261
INLAND	(714) 383-4811

408.9 The following table depicts the weight and dimensions of a variance load whereas California Highway Patrol involvement is mandatory.

CHP ESCORT TABLE

ROUTE CLASSIFICATION	WIDTH	LENGTH	HEIGHT	SPEED	WEIGHT
Multi-lane freeway or express way with 12' lanes, 4' shoulders *A-Yellow	17'+ if 3 or more lanes 16'+ if 2 lanes	Unlimited	No maximum **	Below 30 mph below posted maximum speed limit	250,000 pounds
Substandard freeway or 2 lane road with 12' lanes and 0' - 4' shoulders *B-Green	15'+	Unlimited on controlled access roadways 135' for others	No maximum **	Below 30 mph below posted maximum speed limit	250,000 pounds
Two Lane road 11' lanes 0 - any shoulder *C - Blue	15'+	135'	No maximum **	Below 30 mph below posted maximum speed limit	250,000 pounds
Two Lane road 10' lanes 0 - any shoulder *D - Brown	15'+	135'	No maximum **	Below 30 mph below posted maximum speed limit	250,000 pounds
Two Lane road Less than 10' lanes *E - Red	15'+	135'	No maximum **	Below 30 mph below posted maximum speed limit	250,000 pounds

One unit unless cross or oncoming traffic requires additional units.

*** Letters and colors correspond to Caltrans pilot car map codes and route designations.**

**** Loads over 17' high require route review. Any obstacle within 3" of load height may require CHP involvement.**

409 MILITARY CERTIFICATION

When an extralegal movement is certified to Headquarters Permit Office by the Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC), or the individual military branches as essential to the National Defense or by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) as vital to the space program, the districts will issue the necessary permit under the conditions specified by Headquarters notification. All such certifications are subject to the bridge loading charts.

409.1 MTMC has agreed to the following conditions:

409.1.1 Night or weekend movement will not be permitted unless a national emergency is declared.

409.1.2 Movement through the Los Angeles or San Francisco areas will be scheduled for Saturday or Sunday mornings for loads greater than 15'0" in width.

409.1.3 Provide five working day notice for State clearance.

409.1.4 Provide complete dimension of load.

409.1.5 Provide complete description of load.

409.1.6 Provide loaded dimensions.

409.1.7 Provide origin and destination.

409.1.8 Provide dates shipment is scheduled to depart origin and arrive at destination.

409.1.9 Name of carrier.

409.1.10 Description of hauling equipment (subject to State inspection whenever questionable equipment is being used).

409.1.11 Carrier's proposed route.

409.2 NASA has designated a principal and an alternate representative to certify the need for permits to move over-dimensional shipments by highway through the State. They are:

**Doris C. McGraw/Designated Representative
Chief, Passenger and Traffic Management Branch
Transportation Management Division
Office Phone: (205) 544-4554
Home Phone: (205) 753-2321 (Union Grove, Alabama)
Telex 594416**

**Bernice K. Choate/Alternate Representative
Office Phone: (205) 544-4555
Home Phone: (205) 881-6025
Telex 594416**

Districts will handle directly, without military certification, all movement of military cargo, equipment or loads to defense installations within the general hauling policies. District personnel should avoid referring applicants through military channels for any extralegal hauling allowable under the guidelines. When a proposed movement exceeds the guideline limits or waivers of the usual permit restrictions are requested, the carrier or local military representative should be informed that all such requests must be certified through the designated military channels. Carriers should also be informed that their requests should be routed through the military procurement agency involved, rather than the certifying agency direct.

As presently constituted, the following military representatives are authorized by the Department of Defense to handle military certifications in California:

For commercial movements of extralegal loads for all Military Services:

Western Area

**Chief, Special Movement Section
Military Traffic Management and Terminal Service
Oakland Army Terminal
Oakland, California**

For oversize, military-owned vehicles or extralegal military cargo on military-owned vehicles:

- Sixth U. S. Army Area
Chief, Freight Traffic Unit
Transportation Services Branch
Logistics Services Division
Sixth U. S. Army**

Presidio of San Francisco, California

- **Pacific Division, U. S. Navy**
Director, Transportation Division
Naval Facilities Engineering Command
FPO, San Francisco, California
- **Southwest Division, U. S. Navy**
Director, Transportation Division
Naval Facilities Engineering Command
1220 Pacific Highway
San Diego, California
- **U. S. Marine Corps**
Traffic Management Officer
Marine Corps Base
Camp Pendleton, California
- **Traffic Management Officer**
Marine Corps Supply Center
Barstow, California
- **U. S. Air Force**
Director of Transportation and Supply
Sacramento Air Material Area
McClellan Air Force Base, California

As Army Reserve units and the California National Guard are not covered under auspices of the DIRECTORY OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND STATE OFFICIALS AUTHORIZED TO REQUEST MILITARY MOVEMENTS ON PUBLIC HIGHWAYS as published by HEADQUARTERS, MILITARY TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND TERMINAL SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20315, the provisions and procedures as stated under use of tactical military vehicles shall be imposed to handle the issuance of all permits to these military organizations.